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# TASEK BERA MALAYSIA



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**TRAFFICKING IN ILLEGAL DRUGS CARRIES THE DEATH PENALTY**

*Malaysia*  
*Truly Asia*



# A Wetland Wilderness

Located in Southwest Pahang, Tasek Bera is situated in the saddle of the main and eastern mountain ranges of Peninsular Malaysia. This natural freshwater lake system, extending 35km long and 20km wide, drains into the Pahang River via the Bera River, the main artery to the north.

As the largest freshwater swamp in Peninsular Malaysia, Tasek Bera or Bera Lake remains both a unique and



remote wetland wilderness. Surrounded by a patchwork of dry lowland dipterocarp forests, the lake environment stretches its tentacles into islands of peat swamp forests. Rich in wildlife and vegetation, Tasek Bera is an ecosystem which supports not only a diversity of animal and plant life, but sustains the livelihood of the Semelai, the aboriginal people inhabiting the wetlands.

Like many other wetlands, Tasek Bera also plays an important role in flood control, water flow regulation and purification and provides many natural resources for the

local community. Therefore, it has been protected under an international treaty – the RAMSAR CONVENTION, which allows traditional and wise use of the area to continue. Tasek Bera Ramsar site was declared in November 1994. It includes a core zone of 26,000 ha. and a buffer zone of 27,500 ha.

*A serene view of Tasek Bera*



*Semelai dug-out canoes or 'Perahu'*

In order to conserve and enhance the bio-diversity of Tasek Bera and ensure the wise use of its natural resources, the Pahang State Government has implemented a 3-year programme with the financial assistance of the Danish Government under its DANCED scheme (Danish Cooperation for Environment and Development) and technical assistance from Wetlands International-Asia Pacific. In addition to conducting biological and wildlife surveys, Wetlands International is formulating a nature based tourism development plan that includes the establishment of a visitor centre/field study centre, training of site personnel and the integration of the local community into the overall development.



# Seasons

Tasek Bera has distinct wet and dry seasons which may determine the best time to visit. The wet months are from April to May and from September to January; while the dry periods are from February to April and June to August. According to the local aboriginal community, known as the Semelai, good fishing occurs after heavy rains. Some sections of forest trails may be inaccessible during the wet months.

## Habitats and Wildlife

Tasek Bera is characterised by a watery landscape dominated by large grass-like blades of pandanus leaves which line the narrow channels leading into the lake. Navigating by boat through the swamp forests, a variety of ferns, orchids and epiphytes can be seen attached to tree trunks and branches, while strands of thorny rattan weave through the undergrowth. Among the fields of metre high reeds and rows of dense foliage found in the open water, dozens of pitcher plants hang in shades of green and red. In the drier areas, lowland rainforest trees and palms add to the diversity of the wetland reserve.

Tasek Bera is a sanctuary for more than 200 bird species, 50 mammals and 90 fish species. It is also a habitat providing



Anglers trying their luck at Sudin Jetty



Many bird species call Tasek Bera home

food and shelter for bird life, including kingfishers, hawks, herons, but overall, waterbirds are strangely scarce. Though very difficult to see in the wild, the extended wetland area and its surrounding forests still support tigers, tapirs and elephants, all endangered species. Other wildlife known to exist in Tasek Bera include the clouded leopard, wild boars, monkeys, mousedeer, flying squirrels and flying lemur though the endangered crocodile called the Malayan False Gharial is a rare sight these days. As an important biodiversity reservoir for freshwater fishes, Tasek Bera contains a large number of the country's total species, including popular aquarium fish such as harlequins and tiger barbs as well as large predatory catfish and other sport fish.



Pandanus plants are a common sight in Tasek Bera.



# Nature Activities

Being off the beaten track, Tasek Bera offers its own share of recreational and adventure opportunities for the nature enthusiast. The relative isolation and tranquil surroundings of the open water are perfect for boating and kayaking. Visitors will enjoy spending a few hours cruising the myriad of river channels and inlets to explore the vegetation and search for wildlife.

Biologically rich in flora and fauna, the lowland rainforests offer ample opportunities for jungle trekking excursions. With over 15 types of sport fish in the rivers and lake, Tasek Bera is a haven for anglers.

In order to ensure their safety, visitors are advised to hire a Semelai guide for all nature and sport fishing activities on the lake or in the surrounding forests. This is because of the extensive and maze-like nature of the swamp and its intricate water ways which requires the expertise of the Semelai to traverse.



*Still waters give wonderful reflections of the surrounding forest*



*Pretty flower and also potent medicine plant*

## The Semelai

Archaeological evidence suggests that aboriginal people have lived in Tasek Bera for over 600 years. Today there are approximately over 1200 Semelai.



*Semelai dwelling made from bamboo and tree bark*



*Local craftsman at work*

The majority of Semelai live in Pos Iskandar, a settlement area with five main villages where they cultivate hill rice, cassava, vegetables, fruit and rubber trees. Traditional Semelai homes are built from forest products such as bamboo for flooring and tree bark for walls. Dependent on the lake and forests, the Semelai continue to fish, hunt and trap wildlife to supplement their income. Adept at utilising forest products to make traps, spears, and canoes, the Semelai still use these traditional devices for their daily catch. They also practise the traditional collection of "minyak keruing", the resin from the Keruing tree which can be used for making torches, sealing boats and as an ingredient in perfume. Medicinal species, usually planted near the home, are still used to fend off fever and other ailments. With only a few people owning shotguns, the Semelai still use traps to hunt game (mainly wild boar and deer). Their extensive knowledge of both the forest and lake habitats make them a popular choice as guides among sport fishermen. Their traditional handicrafts made from wetland and forest products such as coloured mats, miniature boats, fish traps, mouse deer traps, axes and other items are available for sale at Pos Iskandar.



From Mentakab /  
Kuala Lumpur

From Kuantan

Temerloh

Sungai Pahang

PAHANG

Kuala Bera

Tasek Bera  
Project Office

Gugusan  
Felda Bera

Kerayong

Triang

Sungai Bera

Bukit  
Bertangga

Chini Forest Reserve

Kemayan

Sudin Jetty

DARA Jetty

Muadzam Shah

From Bahau

From Felda Cempaka

From Rompin

Sungai Serting

Tg. Kuin  
Tourism Complex

Negeri Sembilan

Pos Iskandar




TASEK BERA

Kota Bahagia

From Bahau /  
Ayer Hitam

From Segamat

LEGEND

-  Bera District
-  Road
-  River

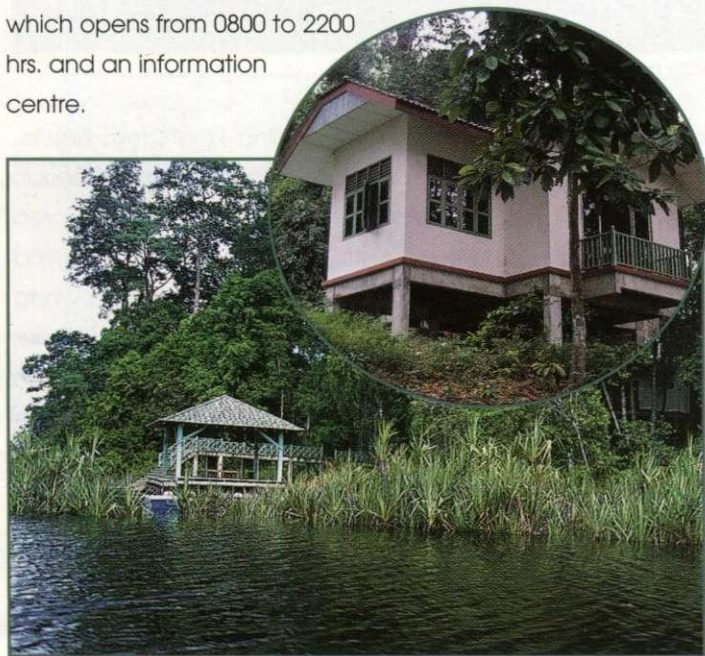
(Map is not drawn to scale)





# Accommodation

In view of its remoteness, the only accommodation available within the Tasek Bera reserve is Persona Lake Resort. Sited atop a forested hill and overlooking the lake, the resort offers two exclusive dormitories, each can accommodate 20 people, a chalet for two and a resthouse with four rooms, each room can accommodate 2 people and a camping ground with basic facilities. The resort affords great views of the surrounding scenery. The resort also has a restaurant which opens from 0800 to 2200 hrs. and an information centre.



Persona Lake Resort

For more information, please contact:-

## Persona Lake Resort, Bera

Tel : 09-276 2505

Fax : 09-255 3386

e-mail : azizplrb@tm.net.my

## Temerloh Sales Office

Tel : 09-296 8280

For those interested in day outings to Tasek Bera, other options may be to arrange to stay in Triang 40 km or Temerloh 70 km away from Bera, where accommodation and other facilities such as banks, grocery stores and post office are available.

# Getting to Tasek Bera



River tour with a Semelai guide

Given the extensive area covered by Tasek Bera, travellers will be glad to know that there are several options by road to reach this remote wetland wilderness. The easiest route from Kuala Lumpur follows the Karak Highway to Temerloh and then South towards the town of Triang, where signboards, just before Kerayong, will lead you to the northside jetties and tourism complex. A second route

goes through Seremban, Kuala Pilah and Bahau in Negeri Sembilan and then heads north to Triang. Entering from the south end of the lake, an alternative route leads from Bahau to Ayer Hitam and then heads east towards Muadzam Shah, and then look for a turnoff signpost to Tasek Bera, which leads up the east side of the wetland to the tourism complex. Travelling time from Kuala Lumpur is 3½ to 4 hours.

Alternatively visitors can also take the train from both Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Trains stop in Triang and Mentakab respectively, where taxis for hire are available to the Bera jetty, about 45 minutes and 60 minutes respectively. Persona Lake Resort is also offering transportation from Temerloh or Triang Bus Terminal at a nominal charge upon request. There are no local car hire facilities, so cars must be hired in Kuala Lumpur or Kuantan.

For further train information, please refer to KTM BERHAD  
Tel : 03 272 2828 or 03 273 8000

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